AN ADVENTURE ON THE ROUTE FROM IRKUTSH TO PEKIN

BY WILLIAM MURRAY GRAYDON.

The first tidings of the war in Corea reached me on the eve of my proposed departure from Irkutsk, the thriving metropolis of eastern Siberia. I had stopped off for a couple of days on my way to Vladivostok, where I intended to have a look at the great Transsiberian railroad, and then return home by a

Pacific steamship. But now the prospect of witnessing a struggle between two such nations as China and Japan tempted me to alter my plans, and after several hours' reflection I hit upon seemed cruel on such a rugged and uneven a scheme that seemed feasible. This was nothing less than to travel with or under the protection of the Russian heavy mail, which I knew was dispatched south to Peking of the cliffs. There was barely room for the every fortnight. Though the journey was a camels to walk abreast. On one side of us rugged and wearisome one of more than the rocky walls rose as though to pierce the 1,000 miles, it offered many inducements in the way of scenery and curious stopping places. Moreover, so great is the respect felt never see more than a quarter of a mile no more fitting person could be named than by the wild Mongols of the desert for the ahead. rulers of Asia that a Russian mail cart was

friends at St. Petersburg, and as a result of that interview the next morning but one saw me riding out of Irkutsk on the back of a wiry-looking mule, with my scanty belong-ings packed in the saddlebags. At a distance of a few yards I was preceded by the Russian mail cart, which was simply a box-

I was in good spirits in spite of the long

and uncertain journey that stretched before

custom than from fear that we might need

We traveled at the rate of from thirty to

forty miles a day, and soon after leaving the shores of Lake Bulkal we had the lofty

ranges of the Altai mountains constantly in

sight ahead of us. At the frontier town of Kiakhta, where we spent a night, I saw tacked up on the wall of the post house a proclamation offering a reward of 2,000 rubles for one Serge Platoff, a notorious

Terrorist who had escaped a month before from the forwarding prison at Irkutsk. He

was described as a tall, dark man, with a white scar on his throat.

"Why is the placard posted here, Ivan?" I asked the Cossack. "Can it be that Serge Platoff is suspected to be in the neighbor-

"I don't know, your honor," he replied.
It is not likely that the convict would come

south when he could more easily escape to Russia or the Pacific." This was the longest sentence Ivan had spoken since we started.

and he made up for it by sitting in moody silence around a tea-samovar all the evening.

The next day we plunged into the foothills of the Altais, and thirty-six hours of rugged

traveling brought us to the Tartar town of Maimatchin. I rode the last dozen miles of

the way on the seat with Ivan, for in the afternoon my mule stumbled and broke its

right fore leg, an accident that compelled me

Maimatchin was a wretched and barbarous

beside the mail cart at the stables, which were on the opposite side of the court yard from the post house. In the latter building I was provided with a dirty room and a hard

bed, but I was too tired and sleepy to mind such little discomforts.

and breakfasting in the dingy front room of the post-house in company with three Tariars, a Mongol, and a yellow dog. The proprietor himself was a Tartar, and I don't suppose the town hald a single English-

After making an unsatisfactory meal of

the cart, and on the seat was perched a stranger—a uniformed Cossack of about Ivan's build, but with a much heavier black

beard, and a more flerce and repulsive coun-tenance. He was actually on the point of driving out of the yard when I shouted to

"Hold on," I said. "Don't go without me.

Where is Ivan Ivanovitch?"
"Gone back," the fellow replied, pointing in the direction of lekutsk. His turn is done.

and mine begins. The mail changes drivers

"Ah, I didn't know that," said I, which was true enough. But at the same time I knew nothing to the contrary, as Ivan had

knew nothing to the contrary, as Ivan had never vouchsafed any information on the subject. Nevertheless I was a bit suspicious, and glanced around at the post-house. The l'artars were lounging in the doorway, looking calmiy and stolidly on, and I at once felt assured that all was right. I started to mount the seat, saddlebags in hand, but the Cossack pushed me back.

"What are you trying to do?" he growled.

"You can't ride with the mail. It is forbidden."

them over the Cossack's insolent manner van-

"I beg your pardon, your honor," he said humbly. "Of course it is all right. But how was I to know? That blundering tongue-tied

Ivan Ivanovitch never so much as mentioned

Please to step up.

He lowered his whip, and looked at

maited fish, and sour bread, I strolled the court yard, where I found a surprise

The camels were harnessed to

By this time I had become accustomed to our early starts, and at daybreak I was up vinced,

to shoot the poor beast.

speaking resident.

me with a scowl.

awaiting me.

THE STRUGGLE.

me, and of course both Ivan and I carried ing to fear from Cossacks, surely, arms, though it was more from force of He gave me so piercing a look

drawing my own weapon.

stand," he muttered rapidly. "T not the real Cossacks—they are

"Serge Platoff?" I gasped.

eyes dropped.

killed.

must win.

miracle

"We have noth

gave me so piereing a look that my dropped. "Ah, but you don't under-

convicts from the mines, dressed in the

niforms of the Russian soldiers they have

By this time the camels were on a trot,

and as Feeder shouted and screamed at them. they broke into a swift and clumsy gallop Behind us the clatter of hoofs rang sud-

ground we did seems nothing short of a

thrilled me to the very bone. Under his tangled beard, and showing plainly against

his bronzed throat, was an oblong white scar. The truth flashed upon me at once.

My companion was Serge Ptatoff himself, and the Cossacks were pursuing him.

My face must have betrayed me, and shown the ruffian that I had pierced his

identity. He returned my horrified stare with a look of ferocity, and thrust his pis-

tol into my face. I knocked it upward as he pulled the trigger, and it exploded in the air. I had my own weapon ready, but before I could get the drop on him he let his pistol fall and caught both my wrists in his brawny hands.

To and fro we struggled over the narrow

and the thought maddened me. By a desperate effort I tore one hand loose. It was

instantly snatched again, and in the scuffle the trigger snapped. With the sharp re-

port the convict's hold relaxed, and I felt

I suppose he was mortally hit, but I did

in his brawny hands.

him sinking under me.

I heard of them the other day,

ragged-looking street.

We were clear of the town before the sun-was fairly up, and for many hours we trav-

eled over the worst road I had ever seen. The tinkling of beils and other cherry sounds faded and vanished, and as we pushed on for hour after hour the dreary solitude and silence became oppressive. My new driver was even more tacitum and glum than Ivan, and beyond learning his name—which was Feodor—I could get simply nothing out of him. Occasionally he shot a quick, curious giance at me, but for the most part he was engaged in urging the camels to a speed that

The middle of the afternoon found us

We had been traveling on this perilous never known to be molested. Once at Peking I would be all right, for an old friend of tance. The sound came from behind, and mine was artillery instructor in the Chinese army.

I slept over the question that night and the morning found me decided. I posted off to the residence of the governor general of the province, to whom I had previously delige the province, to whom I had previously designed the morning found me decided. I posted off to the residence of the governor general of the province, to whom I had previously designed the morning found me decided. I posted off to the residence of the governor general of the province, to whom I had previously designed the province and as a result of the sound came from behind, and as the mail cart was high, with a project-ing shelter roof, I had to thrust my head around the angle to see. I had not been through all of his comically misspelled letters the courage, gentleness and probity of the man shines clear.

Nothing is more beautiful than the reverence which Fenimore Cooper, a man of great genius, had for Richard Dale, and the same and was an able and brilliant seaman, and around the angle to see. I had not been through all of his comically misspelled letters the courage, gentleness and probity of the man shines clear.

Nothing is more beautiful than the reverence which Fenimore Cooper, a man of great genius, had for Richard Dale, and the was educated in all the courtesles of ling shelter roof, I had to thrust my head and was an able and brilliant seaman, and around the angle to see. I had not been through all of his comically misspelled letters the courage, gentleness and probity of the man shines clear.

Nothing is more beautiful than the revergence was a self-beautiful than the revergence of the governor general of the man shines clear. uniforms and rifle barrels. They were over-hauling us on a rapid trot, and but for the Cooper shows to lesser minds that intelleccreaking of the cart we must have heard can never lose anything by paying tribute to them much sooner.

I communicated my discovery to Feeder. "Cossacks?" he cried in a tone that roused Russian mail cart, which was simply a box-like arrangement on two wheels, drawn by a pair of sturdy and oft-tried camels. The driver was a bearded and stolid Cossack, who answered the name of Ivan, and whose vocabulary was apparently limited to monosyllables. were controlled and guided entirely by voice—he pulled a heavy pistol from his pocket.
"What is wrong, Feodor?" I demanded.

sailed blue water, and he had the extra-ordinary fate of never going through an action without being wounded or captured and sometimes both. Four times was he taken prisoner during the revolution. Yet in spite of it, he managed to serve his country actively through many of those troublous

He also had such minor experiences as being knocked overboard and battling for his life for an hour in an angry sea, of falling into the hold and breaking most of his bones except his neck, and of being struck by lightning and remaining insensible for hours. Yet he lived to a good old age, and died peaceably in his bed.

the men had been shot brough the arm by Serge Platoff—for it was indeed be. The daring fellow had killed poor Ivan in the stable the night before, I was told, and hidden the body under a pile of hay. By putting himself in the driver's place be

hoped to escape into China, and he would probably have succeeded had not the Cos-

sacks who were tracking him reached the town several hours after his departure, and ust as Ivan's body was discovered.

Three of the party pushed on down the road with intent to recover the mail from

the shattered cart and bury the dead con-

vict, and I returned with the others to Miamatchin. On the following day the

men arrived with the mail and my baggage, and as I had no chance of going south

for another fortnight I accompanied the Cossacks back to Irkutsk.

I ultimately decided to abandon my ex-pedition through China, having seen as

much as I cared to of the Altai mountains, and after resting for a few days I con-

tinued my journey to Viadivostok. I shall always regret, however, that Serge Platoff

RICHARD DALE.

One of the I ravest Men Who Ever Sailed

Blue Water. (Copyright, 1895, by Molly Elliot Scawell.)

Commodore Richard Dale. He had few ad-

vantages of school education and was per-

haps the most reckless and original speller

of men, and as fighting, not writing, was his profession, his one weakness—the murder of the king's English—may easily be for-

given him. He was born in Virginia in 1756, and at 12

years of age went to sea, driven by the poverty of home. He was destined to have

as many hard knocks as any man who ever

the United States navy ever produced.

of Ourga and the great Chinese wall.

revented me from seeing the sacred city

Almost as soon as war was declared, Dale, then a fine young follow of 19, enlisted in the feeb's naval forces of the colonies, and the very first time he smelled powder, in 1776, he was captured by the British and taken to Norfolk. There he found a friend of his beyhood, a young man of his own age, Bridges Gutteridge. Gutteridge was a royalist and actually enlisted upon a small British vessel. The first action in which he was engaged—a fight with American pilotboats—Dale met his usual fate and was severely wounded. He was carried back to Norfolk and in the long days of illness and convelescence he began to see his conduct in its true light, and bitterly repented of having fought against his country. He went to work upon als friend Gutteridge and succeeded in converting him, after once having been converted by him, into a patriot. Dale then quietly bided his time to get back into the American navy, and as he said, "I made up my mind if I got into the way." of bullets, it should never again be the bullets of my own country." He managed to get aboard a merches, t ship and was captured as usual. But this time it was just he very sort of a capture that Dale desired. his ship being taken by the Lexington, a of England quickly and went to France. Here, smart little cruiser under the command of at l'Orient, he found Paul Jones, then fitting lashed together. He gave an order, and ris-Captain Barry, a brave officer with whom Dale's life was afterward much connected. Dale lost not a moment in enlisting as mid-shipman on the Lexington, and the first me she backed her topsails at a British versel, she was captured and Dale was prisoner for the third time. "These are

The British threw a prize crew on the American brig and directed her to make a port. But a number of Americans, among them Dale, being left on board, they rose against They are making their way to China, mur-dering and robbing travelers as they go the prize crew, retook the ship and carried her into Baltimore. Within a few months along. And their leader is the terrible Serge the Lexington again put to sea, with Dale as master's mate. The ship salled for France and cruised bodly into European "Yes, your honor. So you know what we may expect if we are caught. Unless we soon reach the end of this perilous road. waters. One night, in September, 1777, Cap-tain Johnson of the Lexington found himself close under the quarter of a well armed British cutter. The two gallant little ver-sels opend fire with great spirit, and the where we can escape to the mountains, we are lost. It will be a hard race, but we must win. Be ready to shoot if they come within pistol range." Americans were getting decidedly the better of it, when their shot gave out. Dale and the other officers collected every scrap of iron about the ship that could be found or wrenched from its place to fire in the place of shot, but the unequal fight could not last denly nearer and louder. The exciting ride that now began left me no opportunity to long, the brig was given up after several of her officers and men had been killed, and Date was a prisoner for the fourth time reflect on the truth of the remarkable story I had just heard. If death in one shape rode at our heels it yawned before us in before he was 21 years old.

still more frightful form. Words cannot describe the mad tear down that narrow and rugged path. As the snorting camels gailoped on the mail cart swayed from side III. The Lexington's officers and men were carried to England and thrown into Mill prison where they underwent the agonies of famine to side, now grazing on the rocky wall on the right, now lurching dizzily over the brink of the awful chasm. I had the inand privation. Dale always spoke of those dreadful days with horror, and told of being driven by hunger to kill a stray dog, which side seat, but there was scant consolation in that. With every second I expected to be dashed to death in the depths of the gorge and that we covered in safety what and the Americans began the almost im possible task of scooping out enough earth t crawl through to the other side. They coul Meanwhile we were drawing rapidly near to the spot where the road wound out of sight around the cliff. There, I felt convinced, certain and unavertible destruction awaited us. We would fly into the air at a tangent and go crashing down for hundreds of feet to the rocks below. I had eyes for acthing but the path shead, though I could hear the loud clatter of hoofs that told the horsemen were gaining on us. Feedor also only work while exercising in the prison yard, and had to put the dirt in their pockets as they scooped it up. Nevertheless, after working for weeks at it, on a dark night in February, 1778, Captain Johnson, Dale, and several of the Lexington's crow, crawled through and found themselves free at last of the prison walls.

It is strange that men who could accomplish this should have been so unwise as to horsemen were gaining on us. Feodor also heard, and he stopped his mad screaming at the camels long enough to thrust his head stay together, but for a week the whole party wandered about the country at night half starved and half clothed, in the worst of wintry weather. At last they concluded heard, and he stopped at the card at the camels long enough to thrust his head at the camels long enough to thrust his head and one arm around the angle of the card. The loud crack of his pistol was followed by a shout of rage. Then two or three reports rang out together and the bullets whistied by us.

With a flendish smile, and the weapon still smoking in his hand, Feedor turned toward me again. I had just glanced up toward me again. I had just glanced up toward me again, I had just glanced up toward me again. I had just glanced up to London. They were still hunted for, and the house in which they were concealed was raided. Dale and his friend es-



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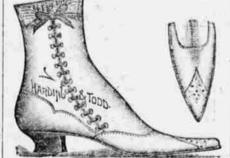
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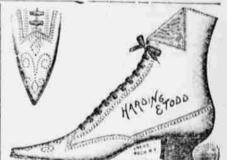
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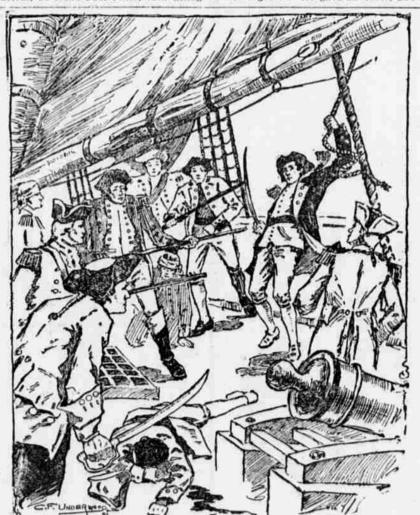
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You should see

them.

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appearance, were impressed. In a little while as Captain Pearson hauled down his flag of his death, except that he had on a com-plete suit of British uniform. How he got it remains a mystery, and from that day until his death, forty-seven years afterward, Dale kept the dangerous secret of the person who risked so funch for him. It is supposed that he was provided liberally with money, and even with a payment, for he was out



DALE SWUNG HIMSELF OVER.

nut the Bon Homme Richard, which was ing to see it executed, measured his length nder and Dale were to win immortality. Dale was then an active, handsome young fellow of 23, and had seen more hard service than many officers of the highest rank.
At the first glance Paul Jones saw- his steadiness, cooliess and splendid qualities as a sea officer, and soon made him first lieutenant on the Bon Homme Richard. A deep attachment sprang up between these two kindred souls, and they were so inti-mate that in private Dale always spoke of his old captain as "Paul," although there was much difference in age between them.

ant, and in all the hazardous enterprises of that hold cruiser Dale was the man who was always Paul' Jones' right arm of strength. On the 23d of September, 1779, was fought the celebrated battle between the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis. Dale was not only the first, but the only sea lieuten-ant on board, and proved himself altogether worthy to serve under the great captain who took the Serapis. He commanded the main deck, and although his wretched and defective guns soon became disabled, his activity did not cease for a moment.

At the most critical stages of the battle, when the leaking, burning and helpless Bon Homms Richard seemed in extremity, the master-at-arms let loose more than 100 prisoners, who came crowding up into the magazine passage. Dale, running below, with his pistol cocked, faced the mob, and,

He remained with Paul Jones until they reached America in 1781. He then joined the Trumbull frigate, and went through with his usual experience, a hot fight with a British ship and a severe wound. This time he

and the smartness of their officers and crews, was generally admired, and Dale himself made friends and admirers by his manly and modest bearing. He spelled no better than ever, but his seamanship was beyond reproach. Once, on coming out of Fort Mahon, the President struck upon a rock. Commodore Dale immediately took command of the ship, and got her out of her dreadful position with the utmost skill. He returned home, expecting to spend the rest of his active life to the navy. But in those days it seems to in the navy. But in those days it seems to have been a common practice to treat the most distinguished and deserving officers without the least consideration of their rights

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old friend, Captain Barry, had come into possession of the splendid gold sword given Paul Jones by the king of France, and which Paul Jones by the aing of rates, and water Paul Jones' relatives had given to Robert Morris, and from him Captain Barry got it. On Captain Barry's death he left this sword, most worthin and appropriately, to Dale, the great captain's first lieutenant.

Dale never lost his interest in sallers and all who live by the sea. He was a deeply religious man, and organized a Mariner's church which he urged all sailors to attend. Every I Sunday afternoon for thirty years he went this humble little chapel, and besides ning in the service, would go about among joining in the service, would go about among the sailors who were present, gently inquiring into their wants, and never failing to do a kindness for them when possible. It is said that no man was ever heard to speak a word against him. He died peacefuily, after a short illness, in 1826. The United States named for him a fine sloop of war, which like Dale himself, saw much service and had many vicissitudes. In the main gangway, a memorial plate to him was placed, recalling his services in the fight be-

tween the Serapis and the Bon Homme Rich-ard, and quoting the never-to-be-forgottes words of Paul Jones, when, in his leaking burning and disarmed ship, he was asked to he had struck: "I have not yet begun to fight."

If. L. Stanton in Atlanta Constitution



Your name. Please to step up."

"But I lost my mule yesterday," said I,
"and I want to purchase another."

"I can't delay the mail, your honor," the
Cossack answered, a little sharply, "and,
besides, there are no horses or mules to be
had in the town. You can get one when we
reach Ourga."

I suppose he was mortally hit, but I did
not impose for the bend of the road just ahead,
and then I made a flying leap. I struck
heavily against the cliff, and as I sprawled
forward on hands and knees, clutching at
the slippery rock, I saw cart and camels
plunge by me and vanish. A few seconds
later I heard a crash far, far down in the Cossack answered, a little sharply, "and besides, there are no horses or mules to be had in the town. You can get one when we reach Ourga."

I heavily against the cliff, and as I sprawled forward on hands and knees, clutching at the slippery rock, I saw cart and camels plunge by me and vanish. A few seconds plunge by me and vanish. A few seconds plunge by me and vanish, A few seconds plunge for the docks and were entered as hands on a vessel for Scotland. But Dale's usual ill-fortune followed him. The British navy, wanting able seamen, sent a press gang to the Scotch vessel and Dale and his friend, unluckily attracting notice by their stalwart

they were found out to be American officers Paul Jones directed Dale to take possessio and were sefft back to Mill prison. Forty of the Serapis. The main yard of the and were sefft back to Mill prison. Forty days in the black hole of the prison followed. When this was over, Date earned another forty days in it by singing rebel songs. He continued to sing his songs, though, while in the black hole. After a whole year in prison he made his escape under circumstances which he never revealed to the day of his death, except that he had on a complete sould be something on the deck afterward. But this did not intimidate Dale. The main yard of the and there was some fighting on the deck afterward. But this did not intimidate Dale who at once passed the captain and his first lieutenant aboard the Bon Homme Richard. As soon as the Americans had possession of the Serapis, Dale sat down on the binnacle, overcome with exhaustion, after nearly and even with a passport, for he got out ten hours of maneuvering and fighting, two

magazine passage. Dale, running below, with his pistol cocked, faced the mob, and, under Paul Jones' orders, set them to work at the pumps. He then returned to the deck, and so carried away was he with the ardor of the battle that when, with his invariable fortune a shot struck him in the leg he was quite unconscious of it. As soon

afterward to fight the greatest single ship's on the deck. Then, for the first time, he fight in history, and in which both the comthe deck, however, and his wound heales

varied the performance by being captured for the fifth time. He was soon exchanged, how-ever, and the war ended shortly after. The navy of the United States ceased prac-tically to exist at the close of the revolu-

tion, and Dale went into the China trade. He made a modest fortune, came ashore and In the summer of 1779 the Bon Homme married a beautiful girl, and the ward of Richard, olds crazy and weakly armed, but his old commander, Captain Barry. In 1794 carrying as much valor as any ship affect, the navy was reorganized, and Dale was started upon her daring cruise in the nar-row seas of Great Britain. Every day showed Paul Jones more and more the ad-mirable character of his young first lieuten-fine squadron sent to the Mediterranean. His fine squadron sent to the Mediterranean. His flagship was the president, and it was a sad coincidence that upon this very ship, in the war of 1812, his son, a gallant young mid-shipman, received his death wound. The fine appearance of the American ships